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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: EFCC CHAIR WAZIRI REVEALS SERIOUS
LIMITATIONS

Classified By: Ambassador Robin R. Sanders for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Ambassador spoke to EFCC Chair Farida Waziri by phone on November 10 to discuss ongoing EFCC anti-corruption efforts and deliver USG benchmarks for cooperation. The conversation revealed little substantive detail on EFCC efforts, and instead revealed much more about the serious limitations placed on Waziri and the EFCC by Attorney General Michael Aondoakaa. In one of the most telling moments of the conversation, Waziri asked the Ambassador to call the Attorney General and put pressure on him to cooperate with the U.K. on the current case against former Governor Ibori. Waziri maintained Aondoakaa has assumed complete control of the Ibori case and other "politically sensitive" cases. The Ambassador reiterated to Waziri the seriousness with which we continue to watch the EFCC and will use its performance as a benchmark to judge Nigeria's commitment to battle corruption. END SUMMARY.

IT'S NOT MY FAULT - THE BLAME GAME

12. (C) In her phone conversation with the Ambassador on November 10 (PolOff listened in as notetaker), Waziri was quick to boast of EFCC's most recent accomplishments, which included involvement with UNODC's "Anti-Corruption Revolution" conference on December 9-10 and a PriceWaterhouseCooper structural management consultation for the EFCC's Lagos office. However, when asked about more substantive EFCC issues, like the lack of progress on corruption cases against 31 former governors, Waziri was quick to note the absence of sufficient information in the case files as the reason for lack of progress. She also blamed the press for sensationalized reporting and misquoting her, blamed her investigators for not having enough evidence, and blamed the Appeals Court Judges for not granting trials. Waziri admitted that she is currently hiring SANs (Senior Advocates of Nigeria) to act as prosecutors because the EFCC prosecution cases are so weak.

FORMER GOV IBORI - THE LITMUS TEST

13. (C) When asked about the status of cooperation with the U.K. on the money laundering case against former Delta Governor James Ibori, Waziri admitted that GON Attorney General Michael Aondoakaa has taken complete control of the case and other high-profile cases that are "politically sensitive." She also explained that unlike in the past when the EFCC cooperated directly with the U.K. Metropolitan Police, any "cooperation on a case with a foreign government

has to have the official seal of approval in the form of the Attorney General's signature on the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty." (Comment: Aondoakaa appears to be stalling the process of sharing documentary evidence, presumably as a result of his strong political and financial ties to former Delta State Governor Ibori. End Comment.)

¶4. (C) In one of the most revealing moments of the conversation, Waziri asked the Ambassador for her help to move the Ibori case forward, pleading for her to call Aondoakaa and "remind him that the world is watching." The Ambassador responded that the USG will be watching Aondoakaa, particularly his actions up to and during the January 2009 trial, as a benchmark to determine the level of future USG anticorruption cooperation with the GON. The Ambassador added that any funds for the EFCC would be based on an evaluation of this cooperation, but that we were reviewing possibilities only for the rank and file; there would be no training for senior level EFCC offices. The Ambassador also told Waziri that she could not commit to anything at this time, especially until U.S. budgetary levels are determined, which would likely not happen until well into 2009.

WE WILL NOT ARREST RIBADU
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¶5. (C) Waziri informed the Ambassador that she did not yet get a reply from former EFCC Chairman Nuhu Ribadu regarding her request for a November 14 meeting with him. She also promised the Ambassador that the purpose of the meeting is not to arrest or interrogate Ribadu, but rather to meet collegially to discuss the cases files of the 31 former

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governors -- files she continued to say had weak evidentiary information for prosecution. Waziri added that she did not believe the recent press reports of an assassination plot against Ribadu. On the contrary, she predicted that no harm will come to Ribadu because "he is so widely loved and respected in Nigeria." (Note: In a later conversation the Ambassador had with Ribadu at her residence on November 10, (reported septel), Ribadu was adamant that these same case files were strongly documented. End Note.)

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Waziri's revelation that Aondoakaa is controlling the Ibori case as well as other politically sensitive cases explains much of Waziri's recent defensive posturing. So far, both the media and public have focused all the attention and blame on her; however, we believe from multiple sources that Attorney General Aondoakaa is the larger culprit on top of his everyday thuggery and illicit enrichment. It was Aondoakaa's bile for Ribadu that was assumed to be behind his removal from the EFCC. Aonoakaa also has shown his penchant for delaying tactics on Ibori's case in the U.K. even during Ribadu's tenure. Ribadu, however, in contrast with Waziri, publicly challenged Aondoakaa on his delaying tactics in the Ibori investigation. Both we and our U.K. counterparts will continue to drive home the message that we consider the Ibori case as a litmus test of GON commitment to the fight against corruption, and also push for concrete action on other high-profile corruption cases.

¶7. (U) This cable coordinated with Consulate Lagos.
Sanders